

**SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS
OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION**

**Clark School District
Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process Report 2002-2003**

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This report contains the results of the steering committee's self-assessment and the validation of the self-assessment by the Office of Special Education. The report addresses six principles – General Supervision, Free Appropriate Public Education, Appropriate Evaluation, Procedural Safeguards, Individualized Education Program and Least Restrictive Environment. Each principle is rated based on the following scale:

Promising Practice	The district/agency exceeds this requirement through the implementation of innovative, high-quality programming and instructional practices.
Meets Requirements	The district/agency consistently meets this requirement.
Needs Improvement	The district/agency has met this requirement but has identified areas of weakness that left unaddressed may result in non-compliance.
Out of Compliance	The district/agency consistently does not meet this requirement.
Not Applicable	In a small number of cases, the standard may not be applicable for your district/agency. If an item is not applicable, the steering committee should briefly explain why the item is NA. Example – no private schools within the district boundaries.

Principle 1 – General Supervision
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General supervision means the school district's administrative responsibilities to ensure federal and state regulations are implemented and a free appropriate public education is provided for each eligible child with a disability. The specific areas addressed in principle one are child find, referral procedures, children voluntarily enrolled by parents in private schools, students placed by the school district, improving results through performance goals and indicators (assessment, drop out, graduation), professional development, suspension and expulsion rates.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

District instructional staff information
Suspension and expulsion information

Statewide assessment information
Enrollment information
Placement alternatives
Disabling conditions
Exiting information
Surveys
Referrals
Publications of child find notices
Comprehensive plan
Yearly child find results
Pre-referral form
Teacher Assistance Team (TAT) documentation
Individual Education Plan (IEP)
Northeast Special Education Cooperative (NESEC) handbook
File reviews
School Special education expenditures
Enrollment information
Placement alternatives
Private school information
Child count data
Student Information Management System (SIMS)
Budget
Workshops and inservices
Employee handbook
Area training/Technology for Teaching & Learning (TTL)
Board policies
Continuing education

Promising Practice

The Clark district has a Teacher Assistance Team (TAT) that is active. The teacher fills out a form and the student is observed in the classroom. After the observation the team meets with the teacher to discuss classroom options to help the student succeed.

The six plus one writing traits program is implemented in the district. The elementary teachers attended a workshop for several days to help improve writing skills.

The fourth, fifth, sixth grade teachers and a special education teacher took a class this past summer to go through the Fountas & Pinnell Guided Reading Book. Special education teachers, First, second, and third grade teachers are taking the Guided Reading Class offered through the AREA.

Meets Requirements

Data supports that the school district does have an established and effectively implemented child find system to locate, identify, and evaluate children with disabilities, ages birth through 21 years who may need special education. The district has a system for receiving documented referrals. The school district has policies and procedures which address this issue. The Clark district meets the needs of all students in the referral process.

There are no private schools in the Clark School District.

The district uses relevant school data to analyze and review student progress toward the state performance goals and indicators. Fifty-six percent of all students on IEPs have met their annual goals and six-three percent of the short-term objectives have been met. Review of files verifies this progress.

The school district follows the state guidelines for reporting of students suspended, expelled, or dropped out as per the reports required by the state regulations.

The Clark School District meets the requirements for certified staff. Two teachers on an authority to act are in the process of acquiring the required degrees. Teachers have training to meet the needs of students and their needs.

Out of Compliance

Paraprofessionals need more training to help work with students with disabilities. There is not an ongoing training program for the paraprofessionals

Validation Results

Promising Practices

The monitoring team was unable to validate the pre-referral procedures as a promising practice. In interviews with general teachers, they were all aware of the TAT process, but the fourth through sixth grade elementary teachers were the only ones that indicated they utilized this process before a special education referral. General education staff in first through third grade elementary stated the students they had referred did not go through the TAT process, but were evaluated for potential eligibility for special education.

The monitoring team validated the 6+ Traits of Writing as a promising practice for the Clark School District. All first through sixth grade elementary staff have received training on this approach. It is implemented in the general education and special education classrooms. All students are writing more and focusing on a specific area with each grade level.

The monitoring team was not able to validate the Fountas & Pinnell Guided reading as a promising practice. The general education fourth through sixth grade staff and special education teacher participated in a self-study of the program. Staff were unable to provide evidence to support this as a promising practice at this time. The general education teachers in first through third grade and the special education teacher are taking advantage of the AREA Reading program. Several schools across the state have taken advantage of this program so the monitoring team was unable to validate this AREA Reading as a promising practice.

Meets Requirements

The monitoring team agrees with the steering committee that data for General Supervision meets requirements.

Out of Compliance

The monitoring team was unable to confirm that staff development for paraprofessionals is out of compliance. Through interviews with staff it was indicated to the monitoring team that the district meets the requirements for paraprofessionals in ARSD 24:05:16:05. Although the monitoring team did not find this as a compliance issue, the district may want to proceed to develop improvement strategies to address this area of concern.

Principle 2 – Free Appropriate Public Education

All eligible children with disabilities are entitled to a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. The specific areas addressed in principle two are the provision of FAPE to children residing in group homes, foster homes, or institutions, making FAPE available when a child reaches his/her 3rd birthday and providing FAPE to eligible children with disabilities who have been suspended or expelled from school for more than 10 cumulative days.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

Suspension and expulsion information
Enrollment information
Placement alternatives
Early intervention (Part C)
Exit information
Complaints
Hearings
Monitoring
Age at referral
Number of students screened
Personnel development education
Preschool age
School age
Personnel training
Budget information
Comprehensive plan
Surveys
Age at referral
Personnel training

Meets Requirements

Current practices and past reviews from the state and federal special education monitoring demonstrate the school district provides a FAPE for all children with disabilities. All information is available to the monitoring team to review for assurances of this statement.

Current practices demonstrate the school district provides FAPE for all children with disabilities. Administrators are trained yearly in policies and procedures for expelling or suspending students on IEPs.

Validation Results

Meets Requirements

The monitoring team agrees with the steering committee that data for Free Appropriate Public Education meets requirements.

Principle 3 – Appropriate Evaluation

A comprehensive evaluation is conducted by a team of knowledgeable staff, which also includes parental input. A valid and reliable evaluation will result in effective individualized education programs for eligible students. The specific areas addressed in principle three are written notice and consent for evaluation, evaluation procedures and instruments, eligibility determination, reevaluation and continuing eligibility.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

Disabling conditions
Exiting information
Placement by age
Placement by disabling condition
TAT information
Initial referral
Parent and teacher report forms
Comprehensive plan
IEPs
Permission to evaluate forms
File reviews
SIMS
Surveys

Meets Requirements

Survey results and file reviews indicate the district complies with evaluation policies and requirements. Functional evaluations are being completed. Parent and teacher input into the evaluation process are being utilized. File reviews indicate the Clark school district is in compliance with evaluation requirements. The school district has approved policies and procedures in this area. The district utilizes complete, valid, and reliable evaluations for eligibility of students.

Review of IEPs, survey results, policies and procedures adopted by the school district indicates the school district is following the appropriate state regulations and procedures. The school district follows regulations and requirements set forth by the state office for testing instruments. All evaluations meet the minimum requirements for the state.

Policies and procedures, file reviews and parental surveys indicate the IEP team considers all evaluations to determine a category of disability. According to file reviews, and parental surveys, the IEP team adheres to federal, state, and local policies and procedures. The district provides documentation of eligibility determination to parents.

All students suspected of a disability were reevaluated within the proper timelines. The school district utilizes state eligibility testing procedures to ensure students are appropriately evaluated for continuing eligibility. Procedural requirements are adhered to in accordance with state and federal laws.

Validation Results

Meets Requirements

The monitoring team agrees with the steering committee that data for Appropriate Evaluation meets requirements.

Out of Compliance

ARSD 24:05:25:04:02. Determination of needed evaluation data

As part of an initial and reevaluation the student's IEP team and other qualified professionals, as appropriate must review existing evaluation data on the student and determine what additional data, if any are needed to determine eligibility for special education services. The review team found that the district has not ensured parental input into the evaluation process. The district does have a form for obtaining parental input. However, in 8 of 15 files reviewed no documentation was found to support parental input into the evaluation process. Interviews with staff indicate that the form is sent to parents but not always returned. Prior to the evaluation, special education staff do make contact with families for input either by phone or in person, but these efforts are not documented.

Principle 4 – Procedural Safeguards

Parents of children with disabilities have certain rights available. The school makes parents aware of these rights and makes sure they are understood. The specific areas addressed in principle four are adult student/transfer of rights, content of rights, consent, written notice, confidentiality and access to records, independent educational evaluation (IEE), complaint procedures, and due process hearings.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

Surveys

Comprehensive plan

Parental right document

Consent and prior notice forms

Public awareness information

Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) disclosure

Complaints

Hearings

State Surrogate document

Consent and prior notice forms

File reviews

Special education handbook

School newsletters

Web pages

Promising Practices

The Clark district offers parental rights on a video.

Meets Requirements

The school district policies, parental surveys and file reviews indicate the district ensures notification to parents of their rights. The school district has training, policies and procedures for surrogate parents. The school district has policies and procedures ensuring parents fully understand for what activity consent is being sought. All files reviewed showed parent consent was given.

The school district's policies and procedures provide all parents the opportunity to inspect and review all educational records concerning their child in the provision of a free and appropriate public education.

The school district has policies and procedures to address complaint issues. There have been no complaints at this time. The school district adheres to the federal, state, and local policies and procedures regarding requests for due process hearings.

Validation Results

Promising Practices

The monitoring team was unable to validate this area as a promising practice. School districts are obligated to offer the parental rights and, if needed, in another format. All public schools were given the parent rights video two years ago to use with parents.

Meets Requirements

The monitoring team agrees with the steering committee that data for Procedural Safeguards meets requirements.

Principle 5 – Individualized Education Program

The Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a written document for a child with a disability that is developed, reviewed and revised by the IEP team, which includes the parent. The specific areas addressed in principle five are IEP team, IEP content, transition components for secondary IEPs, annual reviews, transition from early intervention program, and IEP related issues.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

Comprehensive Plan

File reviews

Student progress data

Personnel training

Budget information

Surveys

Report form

Monitoring

Early intervention (Part C) exit information

Complaints

IEPs

Promising Practices

The school utilizes curriculum-based measurements. Grades 1-8 have been normed for fall, winter and spring. Four areas covered reading, math, spelling and writing. Progress indicators are kept on all students to help determine if the goals and objectives are being met.

Meets Requirements

The district has procedures and policies in place to ensure IEPs are appropriately developed and in effect for each eligible student. All IEP timelines have been met. The school district utilizes an appropriate IEP

format and ensures each IEP contains the required content. The school district utilizes written notices with the required content to all parents and/or guardians.

Based on file reviews, student IEPs in the area of transition have been appropriately developed.

Outside agencies are invited to meetings for students of transition age and any other students in need of services not provided by the school.

The district uses relevant school data to analyze and review student progress toward the state performance goals and indicators. Fifty-six percent of all students on IEPs have met their annual goals and sixty-three percent of the short-term objectives have been met. Review of files verifies this progress.

The school district has policies and procedures in place for the provision of an appropriate IEP team. All of files reviewed showed general education, teachers, and administrators at all meetings.

Needs Improvement

One file showed that the IEP was not reviewed on the correct IEP date.

The majority of the files reviewed showed students have been informed as to what will change when they are 18 years old. Two files showed this addressed at 9 months and 10 months prior to the students eighteenth birthdays.

Validation Results

Promising Practices

The monitoring team validated that curriculum based measurement is a promising practice. All students are given an assessment in the areas of reading, math, spelling and writing. The special education teacher uses normative to data to determine how children with disabilities compare to their peers.

The monitoring team validated that the Clark School District keeps progress indicators on all students to determine the percentage of goals and objectives that have been met on the IEP.

The general education teachers and special education teacher have met two to three times to determine how their texts and curriculum align with the state content standards. The workgroups are determining if areas are missing, where the gaps are and determining where the skills are introduced, reinforced and mastery levels.

Meets Requirements

The monitoring team agrees with the steering committee that data for Individualized Education Program meets requirements.

Needs Improvement

The monitoring team agrees that meeting timelines is an area that needs to be improved. Concerns identified were not systemic problems.

The monitoring team addresses transfer of rights to a student under “out of compliance”.

Out of Compliance

ARSD 24:05:30:16.01 Transfer of parental rights

The IEP team is required to address the transfer of rights to a student one year prior to turning eighteen.

The review team noted in 4 of 8 files where the process should have occurred students were informed of the transfer within a shorter timeframe.

ARSD 24:05:27:13:02 Transition services

Transition services are a coordinated set of activities for a student, designed within an outcome-oriented process, which promotes movement from school to post-school activities. The coordinated set of activities shall be based on the individual student's needs, taking into account the student's preferences and interests, and shall include instruction, related services, community experiences, the development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives, and, if appropriate, the acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation. In student IEPs where transition was addressed the IEP did not consistently provide information as to who would be responsible to carry out the activities/goals nor were dates given as to when activities would be initiated or completed.

Principle 6 – Least Restrictive Environment

After the IEP is developed or reviewed, the IEP team must decide where the IEP services are to be provided. Consideration begins in the general education classroom for school age students. The specific areas addressed in principle six are placement decisions, consent for initial placement, Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) procedures, preschool children, and LRE related issues.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Enrollment information
- Placement alternatives
- Disabling conditions
- Placement by age
- Placement by disabling condition
- Monitoring
- File reviews
- Surveys

Meets Requirements

The school district has policies and procedures in place for addressing the LRE of students. Behavioral intervention plans have been written for students who require them. All placements of students are determined on an individual basis by the IEP team.

Validation Results

Meets Requirements

The monitoring team agrees with the steering committee that data for Least Restrictive Environment meets requirements.